



# FEMA

## *Louisiana City Requires Backflow Valves as a Preventive Measure*

Destrehan, LA – Since the invention of plumbing, residents of cities in flood-prone areas have faced the same smelly hazard: sewage backflow.

In these low-lying areas, flooding can cause sewage to back up through drain pipes into homes and businesses. The resulting messes can create serious health hazards and resist cleanup efforts.

“Bordered by Lake Pontchartrain and the Mississippi River, the city of Destrehan has experienced problems with sewage coming into homes as a result of heavy rains and frequent flooding,” said L.J. Brady, assistant director for the St. Charles Parish Department of Wastewater. Sewage/septic systems are designed to remove sewage. But if floodwaters enter the system, the sewage can back up into buildings.

Fortunately, the problem has a fairly simple fix. Installing backflow valves protects homes from sewer backups. The valves block pipes temporarily and prevent flow into the house.

The fix works so well that in 1983, the city adopted an ordinance requiring installation of backflow valves in the sewer lines. The law requires all new construction to have backflow valves; the city recommends installation of these valves for older homes. Since that time, all cities in Louisiana have adopted the International Plumbing Code which requires backflow preventers on new construction.

Installation is simple and a single valve should cost less than \$30. “Any plumber can install the valves,” said Brady.

Savings to families, individuals, and business owners for cleanup of sewage can be significant, especially when considering cleanup costs. The city, which has seen a major reduction in claims, has also realized considerable savings.



Saint Charles Parish,  
Louisiana



### Quick Facts

Sector:

**Public**

Cost:

**Amount Not Available**

Primary Activity/Project:

**Flood-proofing**

Primary Funding:

**Property Owner, Commercial**